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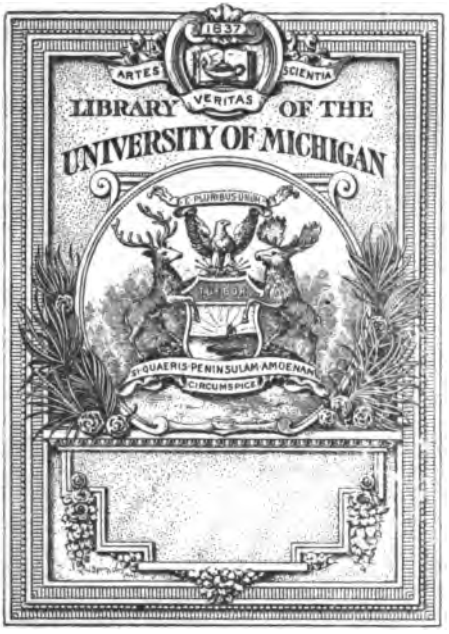
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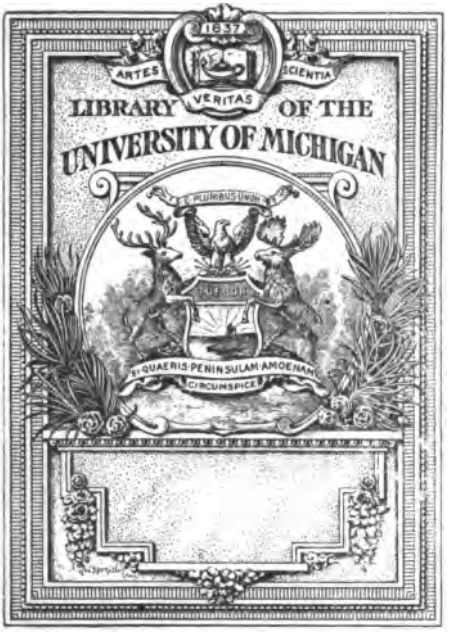
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THE RUBAIYAT OF A HUFFY HUSBAND

MARY B. LITTLE

BOSTON
RICHARD G. BADGER
The Gorham Press
1908

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The Gorham Press, Boston, U. S. A.

Ø 31 Jan 10 E.S.

THE RUBAIYAT OF A HUFFY HUSBAND

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I

I wake, the Sun does scatter into Flight
The Dreams of Happiness I have each Night,
O blessèd Dreams — full of Domestic Bliss,
Too soon alas! They're banished with the Light.

II

I'm going to tell in just the Briefest way
The cause of all my Anguish — if I may —
  Then one and all will know the Reason why
My Mien is Solemn, and I am not Gay.

III

On Christmas day a good Friend did present
My Wife a Book; no doubt with best intent.
The " Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam " 'twas.
Little I dreamed the Woe of its Advent.

IV

After the rush of Holidays was o'er,
And things had settled back in Place once more,
  Wife found the Time to revel in that Book,
And told me how she loved its Ancient Lore.

V

She soon possessed the dreadful Omar Fad,
Which other Husbands, I have learned, think Bad.
  But unlike other Fads which now are Past,
This has the power to make me very Mad.

VI

The others which she tired of years before,—
Collecting Vases, Fans, and Spoons galore,—
  Did not affect the Comfort of our Home,
Therefore there was no reason to be Sore.

VII

But now each time I come back to the House
I find what was my former loving Spouse
  So deep absorbed in Omar's Rubaiyat,
She reads right on, and scarcely does Arouse.

VIII

Or else I find her with her Pen in Hand,
Grinding out Quatrains which mayhap are Grand,
  She tries to make me Listen: Rest assured
That I obey Not any such Command.

IX

Had I but known just what my Fate would be,
Inside a Drawer to which I hold the Key,
  That Book forever would have Disappeared
And thereby would have gained some Peace for Me.

NAVY

X

But ah, the Irony of Fate — that's how
" A Book of verses underneath the Bough "
Is what I hear from Morn to Dewy Eve.
A Wilderness *were* Paradise just Now.

XI

Sometimes when I am very tired, and Plead
To be amused, My Wife says, " I will read."
And this is what she tries to make me Hear,
" With Earth's first Clay they did the Last man
knead."

XII

But don't imagine while Possessed of Wit,
That I assent, and therefore Calmly sit.
I take my hat, and hasten from the House,
And come not back till think she's through with It.

XIII

I might have Prayed, and possibly thereby
Have gained relief from Somewhere in the Sky.
  But Wife says, Omar's reckoning proves it
" As Impotently moves as You or I."

XIV

At least that is the Doctrine he presents,
Although to Me it is Devoid of Sense.
  My unbelief in what he says does Make
My Wife's Love for him only more Intense.

Mau

XV

And thus it is — the Rubaiyat's her Creed.
It is her Comfort in all sorts of Need.
I tear my hair — I storm — I swear, and yet,
'Tis only to dear Omar she pays Heed.

XVI

" Some for the Glories of this world; and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to Come;"
The greatest Boon I ask for is, I may
Supplant this Interloper as a Chum.

XVII

Now all the Years that we have Wedded been,
Not once had Demon Jealousy crept in
  Until this Omar — dead eight Hundred Years,
Did come and her Affection from me Win.

XVIII

I feel chagrined to Think, at this late Date,
A Man so long since Dead can alienate
  The fond Devotion that's been mine alone.
No Wonder I cry out 'gainst such a Fate.

XIX

" The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon
Turns Ashes — or it prospers; and anon,"
Just so those happy Days of long ago
Were Mine, for one sweet space of Time then gone.

XX

The last few Months I eagerly frequent
My Clubs; wherein I hear great Argument
  Regarding Wives, and how to manage them.
But come no Wiser than when in I went.

XXI

Strange, is it not? Of all the Husbands who
Before me passed this Door of Trouble through
Not One has left a word of good Advice,
Nor e'en suggested what is Best to do.

XXII

My Friends can't help me, yet they laugh to Scorn
My downcast looks, and at the way I Mourn.
They do not know the Anguish of my Soul,
Bereft of Wife — unhappy — and forlorn.

XXIII

But this I know, whether the one True Light
Kindle to Love, or wrath consume me quite,
  I'd rather have my former Happiness,
Than to Possess the Whole great World outright.

XXIV

I oft' attempt to show Wife where 'twill Lead.
She gets her Book, and says I must take Heed
That — " The first Morning of Creation wrote
What the last Dawn of reckoning shall Read."

XXV

One day I queried would she please to Say
How long, how long this Fad was apt to Stay?
She smiled and said, " My dear, don't fret about
'Unborn To-Morrow and Dead Yesterday.' "

XXVI

"'The Moving Finger writes, and having Writ
Moves on.'" "And surely, dear, you have the Grit
To be submissive to the Hand of Fate,
When you can't help yourself a single Bit."

XXVII

PREDESTINATION — full of Unbelief —
Must I accept it, is there no Relief?
The very thought of it most drives me Mad,
And bows me to the very Earth with Grief.

XXVIII

Ah, if I only could some way Conspire
" To grasp the sorry Scheme of Things entire";
How soon I'd shatter it to bits — and then
Remould it nearer to my Heart's desire.

XXIX

Or, would some Wingèd Angel ere too Late
" Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate "
And make the stern Recorder change the lines,
And thus restore at ONCE to me My Mate.